

## **Commonwealth of Virginia**

### **One Stop, Front-line Staff Certification Initiative**

#### **PURPOSE:**

To establish the participant eligibility framework and existing competency or certification reciprocity guidelines for the Virginia Workforce Council's (VWC) One Stop Staff Certification Initiative.

#### **SUMMARY:**

The Virginia Workforce Council developed and funded an initiative to certify front-line staff at the One Stop Career (Virginia Workforce Network) Centers and state workforce development professionals. This initiative provides a conduit for VWN centers to meet the part of the Tier II Certification Standards adopted by the Council. A web-based curriculum was procured from the Dynamic Works Institute, with local program management assistance provided by the University of Virginia, Workforce Development Academy. A VWN Center 'front-line' staff member can receive a credential as a Workforce Development Professional or a Business and Employer Services professional upon completion of required coursework and receiving a passing score on their credential final examination. The certification is valid for three years.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

In 2004, the VWC issued Minimum Standards for Service Delivery in One Stop Career Centers (VWN). In 2005, the VWC approved the development of a process to certify VWN Center front-line staff. The certification's objectives are to: achieve a responsive, consistent, credible level of quality service in every VWN Center regardless of region or service provider; increase VWN system effectiveness by increasing staff effectiveness; ensure that front-line staff has adequate skills to apply customer service principles; and enhance their skills to support their success as workforce development professionals.

The Virginia Employment Commission, as administering agency of the Workforce Investment Act, contracted with the Dynamic Works Institute to provide a web-based learning system for VWN Center front-line staff to receive a Workforce Development Professional credential or a Business and Employer Services credential. A curriculum consisting of ten (10) courses was developed for the Workforce Development Professional credential and seven (7) courses for the Business and Employer Services credential. The credential competencies are as follows:

<b>Workforce Development Professional</b>	<b>Business and Employer Services</b>
• History & Structure of the Workforce Development System	• Business Communications
• Career Development Process	• Development of Business Relationships
• Workforce Information	• Knowledge of Economic Development
• Diversity	• Job/Career Development Skills
• Customer Service	• Human Resources Services
• Program Management	• Information Services
• Communication	• Customized Services

• Technology	
• Collaboration and Problem Solving	
• Business and Employer Knowledge	
Virginia Specific Course	

## PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:

### Definition of ‘Front-Line Staff

‘Front-line’ staff is defined as individuals providing direct customer (jobseekers, incumbent workers, and/or employers) services in the WIA Adult, Dislocated Worker or Youth programs.

The local workforce investment boards, through their respective One Stop Career (VWN) Center managers and partner agency staff, will select VWN Center front-line staff representing a cross-section of WIA mandated and non-mandated partners based on the following criteria, and in the order of priority:

1. A full-time, co-located WIA mandated or non-mandated partner staff conducting Core and Intensive Services, such as intake, Job Referral, case management, labor market information and outreach
2. A VWN Center staff that is or will be involved in an interagency approach to planning and service coordination.
3. A VWN Center staff or community partner staff co-located at the Center that provides direct customer services at least one day a week.
4. A VWN Center staff that provides initial customer service, administrative support, technical assistance, management and supervision to any of the major functions of the One-Stop.
5. A community partner involved in or related to the VA Workforce Network, such as, economic development, business assistance and education partners and state approved training vendors.

The VWN Center manager and respective agency partner supervisors shall allow participating staff time during the workweek for the selected individuals to participate.

While the main focus is on front line staff, in order to build a system of competency and knowledge, state workforce development professionals and other workforce and economic development related staff will be eligible to participate. The Governor’s Office for Workforce Development will consult with workforce program partners to identify the participants.

### Existing Competency or Certification Reciprocity Guidelines

The Virginia Workforce Council recognizes that many VWN Center staff possess academic and/or professional credentials. These credentials may have been obtained through educational institutions and technical centers, national or state professional associations, or through a local workforce investment board program. In order for all selected VWN Center staff to meet the objectives outlined above, each initiative participant seeking the Workforce Development Professional Credential or the

Business and Employer Services Credential will be required to take a Virginia-specific course. This course provides the participant information on the structure and goals of the workforce development system in Virginia and its available resources.

The online curriculum for the Workforce Development Professional and the Business and Employer Services Credentials consist of several courses, competency modules, and a final examination. Each course has a pre- and post-test to assess the participant's knowledge of the courses' content. A participant may elect to take the course(s) post-test to 'test-out' of the particular competency prior to completing the course work. However, a participant will receive either the Workforce Development Professional credential or the Business and Employer Services credential only after satisfactorily completing a final, proctored competency examination. The following participant options apply for both credentials:

- Complete the Virginia Workforce Development System (WDS) course (required) with a passing score on the post-test;
- Complete all course and competency modules, including the Virginia WDS course, in their respective credential curriculum, through a passing score on each course post-test.
- Complete the Virginia WDS course, then 'Test-out' of each credential course and competency module (explained above); or
- Complete the Virginia WDS course and receive a passing score on their final credential exam.

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